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AN ANALYSIS OF PARTICIPATION IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY.
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DESCRIPTORS- *BEHAVIOR PATTERNS, *SOCIAL STRUCTURE, *SOCIAL CHANGE, *PARTICIPATION, *DISADVANTAGED GROUPS, EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL MOBILITY, UPPER CLASS, LOWER CLASS, POWER STRUCTURE, MOTIVATION, MIDDLE CLASS VALUES, SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT, ORGANIZATIONS (GROUPS), PERSONALITY THEORIES, REJECTION, SOCIAL OPPORTUNITIES, SOCIOECONOMIC INFLUENCES,

AN ASSESSMENT IS MADE OF VARIABLES THAT ENCOURAGE OR DISCOURAGE PARTICIPATION IN AMERICAN SOCIETY. ONE VARIABLE IS THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF FELT NEEDS, WHICH ARE DETERMINED PARTLY BY PERSONALITY BUT FAR MORE--ESPECIALLY AMONG THE POOR--BY ENVIRONMENT. ANOTHER IS THE RANGE OF OPPORTUNITIES THAT ONE CAN IDENTIFY FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE LABOR MARKET AND IN POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES. A RELATED VARIABLE IS AN INDIVIDUAL'S REPERTOIRE OF ECONOMIC, EDUCATIONAL, SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SKILLS AND RESOURCES. STILL ANOTHER FACTOR IS THE DEGREE OF APPROVAL, OR LACK OF DISAPPROVAL, SHOWN BY INFLUENTIAL PERSONS TOWARD ANY GIVEN ACTIVITY. THE FINAL VARIABLE NAMED IS THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE REQUIREMENTS OF SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, OR POLITICAL UNITS ENCOURAGED OR DISCOURAGED PARTICIPATION. POLICIES AND PROGRAMS FOR INCREASING PARTICIPATION BY THE POOR MUST HAVE TWO AIMS--TO ENHANCE THE INDIVIDUAL'S ABILITY AND INCLINATION TO PARTICIPATE, AND TO MODIFY THE INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE IN ORDER TO MAKE PARTICIPATION LESS DIFFICULT. (THE DOCUMENT INCLUDES 24 FOOTNOTES.) (LY)

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An Analysis of Participation In Contemporary Society

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THE INSTITUTE FOR LABOR STUDIES
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An Analysis of Participation in Contemporary Society

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Introduction

At the time the basic outline of this paper was constructed (1965), the authors were involved in the preparation of a proposal which contained a request for financial support of a program to train 100 labor leaders, drawn from the Appalachian Region, to function more effectively in the effort to accelerate the economic and social development of that area. Subsequently, the project titled "Labor Leadership Training for Community Action," was funded by the Office of Economic Opportunity and, as this is written, the labor leaders have received four weeks of training under the supervision of Dr. Robert Miller, a social-psychologist.

This paper reflects some of the research and reflection which were embodied in the project's design and execution. It also is suggestive of some of the areas of the social sciences which are in need of additional empirical and theoretical inquiry before social-action programs designed to attack poverty, and other targets, are likely to achieve the hoped for results. By the same token, the paper is extended to reflect the need for interdisciplinary attention to aspects of human behavior which today are receiving more attention from public policy-makers. In addition, in some ways it reveals the extent of incompletion of the models of the separate social sciences.

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An Analysis of Participation In Contemporary Society

I.

One of the more noteworthy of current American preoccupations is the continuing widespread concern over problems associated with unemployment and poverty. The impact of this concern has been felt in a variety of ways, not the least important of which has been the attempt to translate recognition of problems into action aimed to alleviate them. At both Federal and state levels of government, programs and agencies have been established to alleviate unemployment and poverty and hopefully eliminate them in the long run through the application of programs based on ever-improving understanding of their causes.

Among the more prominent of the recently established agencies are the Office of Economic Opportunity, the U. S. Department of Labor's Office of Manpower Policy, Evaluation, and Research, and the Appalachian Regional Commission. Activities which have been sponsored by these and other organizations and agencies, as well as the general sentiment of the American people, have been responsible in part for the increasing interest of many social scientists in determining the most effective strategies to be followed if eradication of poverty is to be accomplished by such efforts. While it cannot be claimed that final answers concerning strategy have been determined, the basis for a major strategic thrust has seemingly been identified.

Lasting improvements in income levels and employment status among the poor obviously require social changes if they are to be accomplished at all. The reasoning which supports this conclusion recognizes that the conditions of various strata of the population can be accounted for most reasonably as being products of a certain social structure. Hence, if the conditions are to be changed so that the positions of some strata are to be improved relative to others, then it is necessary to change the social structure which produced the undesirable result.

How is the social structure to be changed? A confluence of opinions leads to the conclusion that the most feasible way, perhaps the only way, is to increase the extent to which those in the

lower classes participate in important activities.[1] That is, they must become a meaningful part of the decision-making process which shapes the opportunities afforded them by society.

If this analysis and its conclusions are accepted,[2] it becomes apparent that the concept of participation deserves further attention. Specifically, there is need to account for variations in patterns of participation among the various elements of society. This is necessary in order to be able to understand what specific policies and programs intended to benefit the lower strata will be productive of the intended results.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the variables which encourage and discourage participation in American Society.

II.

It is important to begin by identifying various areas and types of participation in order to distinguish those which are of greater importance. It is important, too, to indicate clearly what we mean by the term participation.

Beginning first with the definition, it is proposed that the term be defined as any activity which is intended to produce the result that the individual's interests will be taken into consideration when decisions which importantly affect him are formulated. Or, alternatively, participation is any activity which offers reasonable promise of contributing significantly to the individual's power, when power is defined as the ability to achieve psychic and economic satisfactions.

Proceeding from these alternative definitions it is clear that participation may occur in a number of different areas of society. One may participate in his family, in friendship groups, in fraternal organizations, in recreational organizations, in church, in labor markets, in economic interest organizations, in professional interest organizations, in political parties, and in many other areas. Indeed, viewing the matter in this way also makes clear the conclusion that the vast majority of individuals are unable to do anything other than participate in some way or other. Thus, it is necessary to determine what types of participation are most important for the best interests of society and the individual, as they are posed in this paper.

It is suggested that the most important kind of participation is that which affects those decisions which more-or-less directly effect

[1]This conclusion is embodied in the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, Sections 204 and 205. The poor themselves are to be involved in planning, policy-making and operation of the community action programs provided for by this Act. See **Community Action Program Guide,** Volume I, p. 7.

[2]Since "participation" obviously includes labor market participation, there are compelling reasons for accepting the analysis, even if it is accepted tentatively and/or with reservations as to the extent of its applicability.

individuals' social and economic welfare, and the means of achieving welfare available to them. Given the importance at present of government at all levels, it is obvious that the individual should participate in ways which affect political decisions. This may be accomplished at least in part by playing active roles in organizations which pursue the political interest of their members. Examples of such organizations which come to mind most readily are political parties, trade unions, professional associations such as the American Medical Association, business associations such as the National Association of Manufacturers or the Chamber of Commerce, churches, and organizations formed along racial lines such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Also, it is necessary for many people to participate in the system of labor markets since this activity is directly productive of welfare. In many instances labor market activities must be performed collectively. Again, an obvious example is the worker's dependence upon a union to achieve adequate recognition of his interests. Also, upward mobility usually requires possession of education and skills; therefore, the individual needs to participate in the educational institution in order to make his labor market participation effective.

As a final example, the individual typically needs to participate in family, friendship and recreation groups and organizations in order to obtain a wide array of benefits.

It should be understood that the activities just used as examples of participation are among the most basic sources of satisfaction in American Society. It should be understood, too, that these activities produce both psychic and economic returns, although the extent to which these are received simultaneously from the same activity varies with the particular stratum of society under consideration. Although this point and its implications will be developed more fully later, an example helps to demonstrate its validity. For the blue-collar worker, tied frequently to a specific location in a plant and working in conditions of noise and heat, both of which impede communications with others, work may be productive of little more than limited income and meager satisfactions derived from the use of fairly low-level skills. Furthermore, relationships with co-workers off the job, with the possible exception of those associated with a union, may be productive of only relatively limited satisfactions related to recreation or friendship. In contrast, the professional worker seldom works in a vacuum like that of many manufacturing plants. He works with people on an intellectual and social basis and this work not only is productive of relatively more income but, also, of immeasurable more psychic satisfaction.[3] More-

[3]H Arendt, **The Human Condition** (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958).

over, unlike the blue-collar worker, his work in numerous instances is of such a nature that he is in a position which is a part, although perhaps a small part in most instances, of the decision-making process. He is at least relatively close to the decision-makers. The academic economist, for example, forever believes he is working to shape the world of today or tomorrow. Either he is working with young minds who will be tomorrow's decision-makers, or his monographs are efforts which may influence today's decisions. He feels he is part of things and the people around him reinforce that view. Additionally, his social and political activities may be directly related to his work.

It is suggested, therefore, that those in the higher economic and social strata experience an interdependence of area and satisfactions of participation—they cannot participate strongly in one area without doing the same in other areas and they rather frequently obtain both psychic and economic returns from the same activities. On the other hand those in the lower strata experience relatively *slight interdependence of activities and relatively less simultaneous* return of psychic and economic satisfactions. Of the two, the lower strata most certainly are less bound to society and the important decision-making processes.

III.

Although participation in various areas of society is the individual's only means of achieving satisfactions of a most important nature, certain segments of society are characterized by more extensive participation than others. Individuals from some segments experience considerable difficulty in continuous participation, as in the case of the failure of many to achieve continuous, productive employment despite the absence of physical and mental disqualifications. Indeed our vocabulary includes terms such as apathy,[4] alienation,[5] isolation[6] and anomie[7] to describe the nonrelationships

[4]Bernard Barber, "Participation and Mass Apathy in Associations," **Studies in Leadership**, Alvin W. Gouldner, ed. (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1950) pp. 330-41.

[5]Erich Fromm, **The Sane Society** (New York: Rinehart, 1955).

[6]See, for example, Thomas R. Ford, "The Passing of Provincialism," **The Southern Appalachian Region**, Ford, ed. (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1962). A concept related in some ways to this is "resignation." For example, see Herman R. Lantz, "Resignation, Industrialization, and the Problem of Social Change: A Case History of a Coal-Mining Community," **Blue Collar World**, Arthur B. Shostak and William Gomberg, eds. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc. 1964), pp. 258-70. See also Lantz's **People of Coal Town** (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958).

[7]Although the origin of the concept generally is attributed to Emile Durkheim, **The Division of Labor in Society**, and **Suicide**, it was modified importantly by Robert K. Merton, **Social Theory and Social Structure** (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1957). For a good description and analysis of the evolution of the concept, see Marshall B. Clinard, "The Theoretical Implications of Anomie and Deviant Behavior," **Anomie and Deviant Behavior**, Clinard, ed. (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1964).

between large numbers of people and the mainstream of society. And the state of poverty is the state of low order participation, non-participation or discontinuous participation in the labor markets.

A number of explanations have been advanced in an effort to account for the inactivity of such large numbers of people. The higher-than-average unemployment for recent years has been explained by economists either in terms of inadequate numbers of job opportunities because of limited growth of the economy or in terms of changes in labor markets occurring more rapidly than workers' abilities to keep up.[8] Inactivity in organizations and associations has been explained in terms of the centralization of decision-making which, it is suggested, has removed the motive for active interest among the masses of members at lower levels of the hierarchies,[9] and also in terms of conflicting obligations of higher priority activities, notably those entailed by the individual's job and conjugal family.[10] Additionally, it has been suggested that some associations and organizations which could be effective vehicles for people's participation are based upon programs and policies which no longer appeal to the masses of their members.[11] Still other findings have produced the conclusion that the key to participation patterns is the social structure, including patterns of interpersonal relations, within which participation must occur.[12] And, sometimes explanations are advanced in terms of the personalities and psychological make-ups of the individuals under analysis.[13]

[8]For a review of the debate between the proponents of the two explanations, see Eleanor Gilpatrick, "On the Classification of Unemployment: A View of the Structural-Inadequate Demand Debate," **Industrial and Labor Relations Review**, Vol. 19, No. 2 (Jan. 1966), pp. 201-212.

[9]The classic statement of the tendency toward centralization is Robert Michels' **Political Parties**, (New York: Collier Books, 1962). See also, James S. Coleman, Seymour Martin Lipset, and Martin A. Trow, **Union Democracy** (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1962); and, Lipset's **Political Man** (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1963).

[10]Bernard Barber, op cit.; William Spinrad, "Correlates of Trade Union Participation: A Summary of the Literature," **American Sociological Review**, Vol. 25, No. 2 (April, 1960), pp. 242-3.

[11]See, for example, Robert W. Miller, Frederick A. Zeller, and Glenn W. Miller, **The Practice of Local Union Leadership** (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1965).

[12]See **Union Democracy**, op cit.; Spinrad, op. cit.; W. Ellison Chalmers and Nathaniel W. Dorsey, "Research on Negro Job Success," **The Journal of Intergroup Relations**, Vol. III, No. 4 (Autumn, 1962) pp. 344-59; William A. Faunce, "Size of Locals and Union Democracy," **The American Journal of Sociology**, Vol. LXVIII, No. 3 (Nov. 1962) pp. 291-3; Morris Rosenberg, **Occupations and Values** (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1957) pp. 32-3, Chapter V, and the entire work; Gerhard Lenski, **The Religious Factor**, (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, Doubleday and Co. Inc., 1963) Ch. 3; and Fred L. Strodtbeck, "Family Interaction, Values, and Achievement," **The Jews**, Marshall Sklare, ed. (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press. 1958), pp. 147-65.

[13]Everett E. Hagen, "Some Implications of Personality Theory for the Theory of Industrial Relations," **Industrial and Labor Relations Review**, Vol. 18, No. 3 (April, 1956); Nevitt Sanford, **Self and Society** (New York: Atherton Press, 1966); David McClelland, **The Achieving Society** (Princeton: Van Nostrand, 1964); and Harold L. Sheppard and A. Harvey Belitsky, **The Job Hunt**, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1966), Ch. 6.

As important as this work is for understanding the phenomenon of participation, it is limited in value for policy purposes because it has not resulted in a comprehensive theory which adequately includes all of the variables—economic, social, and psychological—as well as definitive statements of their interdependency.[14] Furthermore, the work that has been done has not suggested the extent to which variables associated with the onset of nonparticipation and the period of nonparticipation itself affect the individual. This knowledge is needed to establish program priorities for remedying the conditions of nonparticipation.

This criticism must be tempered by recognition that the comprehensive, integrated theory of human behavior desired by social scientists is not presently attainable using available methodological and analytic tools, especially when the behavior at the focus of study spans three or more disciplines. Yet, it seems there is some value in at least attempting to conceptualize the full range of variables and their interrelations which logic indicates might be of possible significance. This effort should produce more insight into the nature of the problems which would have to be overcome by active efforts to increase the quantity and quality of activities among the lower strata in society.

First, it is asserted as a general proposition that people generally will participate in activities to the extent which such activities are expected to produce satisfactions for felt needs, when such activities also are in conformity or not seriously at variance with the expectations of those whose approval is essential to them. This is merely equivalent to stating that almost all people have some preferences and, generally, will act to realize them utilizing available and known opportunities. More precisely, a number of variables are deduced from the statement which appear to have the quality of determinants of activity.

Participation in various activities may be affected by the nature and extent of the individual's felt needs. In turn, variations in felt needs would seem to relate to two interrelated factors, environment and personality. Results of reported study support the notion that people adapt their needs to what the environment normally is

[14]For another statement of a similar need in a slightly different context see Leonard Goodwin, "Conceptualizing the Action Process," mimeo. According to Goodwin, " . . . psychological variables, such as the effectiveness of a person's action system, need to be related to sociological ones, such as the internal structure and operation of a group, in order to have a meaningful approach to the guiding of social change." p. 15. Also, following a study of social participation of Appalachian Region out-migrants and others, Roscoe Griffin concluded knowledge is lacking for dealing with the nonparticipants. "Appalachian Newcomers in Cincinnati," **The Southern Appalachian Region,** op. cit.

capable of satisfying.[15] For example, it is likely that very few hollow-dwellers in the state of West Virginia feel a strong need to be employed as store managers in the capital city of Charleston, live in middle-class homes, and purchase new cars every two years simply because the possibility of that happening is so remote that maintenance of a strong need for it would be productive of agonizing frustration. On the other hand, those in the upper strata have acquired sophisticated needs for psychic and economic satisfactions because their experiences warrant having them. Yet there are exceptions. Some of the hollow-dwellers leave because of some inner drive. And some residents of the upper classes choose simple lives. Personality differences may account for some of such variations. For most people, then, it seems reasonable to accept the explanation that certain important needs are determined largely by environment. Other individuals, fewer in number, have more needs at variance with their environment. Their personalities demand expression in another setting.

Participation also may be affected by the number of different opportunities for participation the individual is able to identify. As stated before, people in the upper strata probably find that their social, economic, and political activities are closely related, and that, for example, their economic and professional activities lead naturally to an amalgam of social and political activities. If so, the result would be easy identification of a number of relevant opportunities for participation. In contrast, people in the lower strata probably tend to find that political and social activities are unrelated or not directly related to their jobs and families. In the very lowest strata, people may not even be able to identify labor market activity as an opportunity for participation and it is possible that in this circumstance, a condition of chronic unemployment and poverty, even participation in the family and informal friendship groups may decline as individuals are unable to perform an economic function.

Participation patterns also will be affected to some degree by the economic, social, psychic, and political skills and resources available to individuals. Several examples should be sufficient to demonstrate this point. Economic success depends in part on the individual's ability and willingness to be mobile.[16] But geographic

[15]This is a conclusion reached after a study of occupational choice among college students. Morris Rosenberg, op. cit., p. 123. Another example of a study producing this conclusion is Arthur Kornhauser, **Mental Health of the Industrial Worker,** (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1965), pp. 269-70.

[16]This is particularly true for those in the less skilled occupations, who change jobs more frequently than workers in the skilled, professional and technical occupations. See Gertrude Bancraft and Stuart Garfinkle, "Job Mobility in 1961," **Monthly Labor Review** (August, 1963), Preprint No. 2421. See also Gladys L. Palmer, **Labor Mobility in Six Cities,** (New York: Social Science Research Council, 1954) especially p. 125; and Lloyd G. Reynolds, **The Structure of Labor Markets,** (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1951), p. 39.

mobility requires economic resources and occupational mobility requires skill and educational background necessary to qualify for new jobs. More than that, almost all kinds of labor market mobility are dependent upon the individual's ability to fit into new employment and social situations. People in the upper strata have the requisite economic resources. Additionally, they have educational and experiential backgrounds which admirably qualify them for being able to change occupational and social situations. The university professor, for example, frequently has a much stronger orientation to his discipline than to extended family, friendship groups, or a given university. The same kind of statement probably could be made about business managers and other professionals. Consequently, such people may have highly developed abilities to move around to exploit opportunities in various parts of society.[17] Those in the lower strata, however, usually lack economic resources and educational and experiential backgrounds which are essential for mobility, and hence continuous participation. Thus, it would appear they are more closely adapted to the social requirements of particular communities and if they must change geographic locations to achieve employment, as is frequently the case, after the change they may find they are able to participate only in family, informal friendship and occupational activities, and perhaps not even the latter on a continuous basis.

Apart from the skills and resources necessary for economic and social mobility, even people in stable occupational and geographic situations require skills and resources in order to be active in groups and associations. Trade unions, political parties, and other secondary organizations have social and political requirements which must be met by actives. Participants must be able to "fit in" to the ingroup, or a faction, since a variety of evidence suggests that people are actives as members of groups rather than individuals. Also, they must be capable of expressing themselves, and utilizing fairly complicated and formal organizational machinery. People in the upper strata seem to receive extensive preparation for functioning in secondary associations while those in the lower strata, infrequently recipients of the benefits of advanced education and broadening experiences, usually are equipped only for primary relationships such as those associated with family and informal friendship groups.

Another correlate of participation is the extent to which any given activity engaged in by the individual receives the approval

[17]However, it appears that such people have relatively less need to be mobile, although it is well known that there are mobile components of the occupational categories when these are defined broadly.

of those whose approval, or at least absence of overt disapproval, is essential to him. Again, several obvious examples demonstrate the importance of this point. For those employed workers in the lower strata to be active in, say, trade unions or political parties, it would be necessary for them to be absent from the family and neighborhood friends after work and on weekends since these activities cannot be accomplished on the job. In many cases, it is probable that such absences would be resented. Family and neighborhood friends might interpret them to mean that the individual's activities in "outside" groups reflect his preference for them as compared with the "inside" groups. Thus, union and political activities might not be supported by those approval is required by the participant. Conversely, those in the upper strata more frequently find their "outside" activities closely related to their family and friends. Their occupational success may be closely related to their political, professional, social, and recreational activities. Hence, they probably are encouraged to engage in them by their families who have stakes in their success. At the same time, such activities probably are the occasions of meeting their close friends, who may also be their economic allies. Again, there is the possibility of a reinforcing correspondence of interests in a number of different activities in the upper strata which is relatively absent in the lower strata.

Still another example of this is evident in considering labor mobility. Even when individuals in the lower strata are willing to make geographic moves which require them to abandon their "home" areas, doing so may require them to force their families to make social and psychological adaptations for which they may be ill-prepared. For workers and their families in the upper strata, their education and experiences are valuable resources for making their individual adaptations.[18] Therefore, drastic changes such as those introduced by worker's geographic mobility probably are more strongly supported among family members of the upper compared to the lower strata.

[18]In addition, those in the lower strata associate geographic moves with problems—such as separation from the extended family, role changes, moving to urban slums, etc.—while those in the upper strata who move associate this with economic advancement. See Ruth Chaskel, "Effect of Mobility on Family Life," **Social Work,** (Oct. 1964) pp. 83-91. In general, the "home areas" of lower strata workers exert strong constraints on their mobility. For example, it has been found that there are fairly strong tendencies for workers who left their home areas because of unemployment to return when employment opportunities improve. See Gerald G. Somers, "Mobility of Chemical Workers in a Coal-Mining Area," West Virginia University Business and Economic Studies, III. No. 2 (June, 1954) West Virginia University, Morgantown, West Virginia, p. 32. And, Somers, "The Role of Unemployment Compensation in Depressed Areas," **Annual Proceedings, Industrial Relations Research Association,** XI (1958) p. 128.

Finally, another factor impinging on participation is the extent to which the social, economic, or political units comprising the identified areas of potential participation welcome or discourage the individual's participation. This may be termed the structural factor, classifying the other variables—felt needs, identified needs, possession of skills and resources, receipt of approval or disapproval—as individual factors.

The point here is that participation is affected not only by the individual's ability and willingness to participate, as determined by the individual variables just discussed, it is just as importantly affected by the requirements imposed by the groups or organizations within which participation will or will not occur.

All groups or organizations have formal and informal requirements which participants must meet in order to be accepted. Families have different expectations for husband, wife, children, uncles, aunts, etc., which the relevant individuals must match in order to avoid rejection and, hence, non-participation. The same type of requirements are imposed by friendship groups, employers and secondary associations. The higher the structural requirements for participation, the more probable that those in the lower strata will be unable to meet them. Several examples may clarify this point.

The trade union organization provides a convenient illustration of a typical secondary association. Generally, the inner core of the union's organization is made up of people who are full-time functionaries, or at least are people who regard unionism as a valued way of life. Performance of their functions for the organization and their own self-interest seemingly requires the members of the inner core to develop a correspondence of occupational, political, and social activities, in much the same manner that is characteristic of the upper strata although they may be striving for different things. In any event, the inner core gradually establishes criteria which must be met by those who would be accepted as actives. These criteria may include at least the following: acceptance of the political liberal creed; acceptance of collective behavior as superior to individual effort; acceptance, or at least tolerance, of the political sensitivities of those who comprise the inner core including the willingness to confine behavior to some structure of broad constraints essential to support the positions of those in the inner core; demonstration of fundamental loyality to the organization; demonstrated willingness to contribute time and effort to the organization's work and social activities which grow out of the informal operation of the organization, whether or not they are rational activities for the individual; and, willingness and ability to participate within the constraints imposed by the organization's formal structure, such as attendance and participation in meetings conducted according to parliamentary procedure.

If the individual is unable or unwilling to accept some of the most important of these criteria, he will be excluded from participation, or may be able to participate only as an isolated individual or member of an out-group faction, neither of which would be particularly attractive to most people. Again, in several instances, the people from the lower strata would be less able to meet the criteria than other people. This particular example, however, does not discriminate among the various strata as clearly as other structures, probably because compared to, say, political parties, trade unions' memberships are relatively homogeneous. Such discrimination, or structural rejection, as is e v i d e n t is more a consequence of social and political loyalties leading to an in-group's conscious or unconscious rejection of those who fail to conform to the group's expectations.

Structural rejection of those in the lower strata is much more apparent among organizations, such as political parties, churches, and fraternal groupings, and within the system of labor markets. Obvious labor market requirements leading to economic success include education, training and experience mimima, possession of the right color, age and sex, certain personal appearance and manner of speaking, physical and mental health, certain mobility potential, and good connections for the purposes of promotions, favors and new job leads. Most of these clearly can be met more readily by people in the upper strata.

The point is that nonparticipation can be viewed either as the product of the failure of the individual to adapt to the requirements imposed by the structures within which participation is possible, or it may be viewed as the product of the structure's failure to make participation possible. More realistically nonparticipation probably is affected by both, but nonparticipation of those in the lower strata of society is more directly the result of their rejection by the structures, particularly the secondary associations such as formal organizations. Hence, society operates to exclude them from its mainstream. By their exclusion, their interests are not systematically represented and their problems are unattended. This, in turn, produces the result that the secondary associations and organizations tend to be completely irrelevant for those in the lowest strata, inasmuch as they would be included in the decision-making process only if they comprised an organized block of power which the decision makers could not ignore. But such is not likely at present—the lower strata could almost be defined in terms of disorganization relative to participation in secondary organizations. It will be recalled that this seems to be so because of the lack of conjunction of their economic, political, and social activities compared to people in the upper strata.

In turn, structural rejection from participation, which is the key to satisfying the individual's needs, more than likely produces a reaction which makes participation in the future, assuming some structural changes which reduce the stringency of the participation requirements, even less probable. Man tends to adapt to that part of his environment which he cannot change.[19] Hence, those in the lower strata repress the range and sophistication of their needs to bring them into line with the satisfactions that are logical to expect. The individuals become part of valued social systems in which they are accepted because they accept the group's values and expectations, which may include the acceptance of broken-down housing, dirty and unkept schools, and acceptance of welfare as a way of life. (If this seems irrational, it should be pointed out again that such groups are among the few opportunities for any kind of participation by the individual in the lower strata.) In turn, their membership in the group closes the doors to outside participation, even if outside participation would make some sense. Also, the predominance of their experiences with primary groups along with the lack of economic skills and resources characteristic of lower strata does little or nothing to maintain or to develop social, psychic or political skills and resources necessary for participation in formal groups and organizations. Thus, it may be concluded that individuals who change status from participants to nonparticipants after some period of time (probably the varying interval during which the individual comes to the point of accepting the change as permanent) tend to lose their ability to meet organizational and labor market participation criteria.[20] The status change frequently is the result of involutary unemployment or pronounced downward economic mobility. Individuals who have never experienced participant status almost always will tend to have little or no ability or inclination to participate in activities other than those which can be performed within the web of primary group relations.

[19]According to Lenski, op. cit., pp. 129-33, there is evidence that the social environment tends to influence people's systems of thought. Also, following a study of white, very poor church members in Western North Carolina, it was concluded that although the religious sentiments held by those people seemed to interfere with the accomplishment of positive goals, they also served the socially useful purpose of providing retreats from demands which cannot be met. See Berton H. Kaplan, "The Structure of Adaptive Sentiments in a Low Class Religious Group in Appalachia," **Social Issues,** XXI, No. 1, (Jan., 1965) p. 140. For a similar conclusion, see Ford, op. cit., p. 30.

[20]This point can be associated with the onset of anomie if nonparticipation is the result, as it frequently seems to be of " . . . an acute disjunction between the cultural means and goals and the socially structured capacities of members of the group to act in accord with them." Merton, op. cit., p. 162. If forced nonparticipation occurs, and results in "excessive" inferiority feelings, the individual's activity potential may be "paralyzed." Karl Manheim, **Systematic Sociology,** (New York: Grove Press, Inc. 1957) pp. 79-80

IV.

Policies and programs intended to increase participation among the residents of the lower strata must work at solving two problems. They must enhance the individual's inclination[21] and ability to participate and they must modify the institutional structure in order to make participation less difficult. In turn, the structural changes must occur at several levels.

Turning first to the structure, certain society-wide conditions would have to be changed to encourage more widespread participation. In many aspects of American life, relationships are relatively impersonal, particularly when they are of an economic nature. It would appear that when people relate on an impersonal basis for the purpose of attempting through mutual competition to achieve their individual or group goals, there is a tendency for the successful to eliminate the competitive basis of the unsuccessful. Some obvious society-wide conditions which act to repress the participation of those in the lower strata are as follows: social and racial discrimination in employment practices; arbitrary employment standards to eliminate redundant job applicants; regressive taxation; discriminatory law enforcement and judicial practices; discriminatory voting requirements; acceptance of the view that the relatively and absolutely unsuccessful are inferior and, hence, must improve themselves through self-help rather than be given help to demonstrate their values;[22] discriminatory educational standards and opportunities; and, the imposition of the most extreme requirements for most minimal success, illustrating this with the finding that certain mobility rates are highest for the unskilled and semi-skilled, groups which are among the most lowly paid and the most frequently subject to involuntary unemployment.[23] It is quite likely

[21]There is some evidence that deliberately changed attitudes are not productive of behavioral changes. Indeed, attitudinal change may be inversely related to behavior. This can be explained by the use of a model which portrays behavior as a derivative of an environment, which, if it is unchanging, acts to restrain the behavioral consequence of attitudinal changes. See Leon Festinger, "Behavioral Support for Opinion Change," **Public Opinion Quarterly** (Fall, 1964) pp. 405-15. Of course it could be that **substantial** attitudinal change could produce behavior to modify the environment. Yet, it must be recognized that substantial attitudinal change seems to require very complicated, expensive programs, precluding their use on a mass basis because of the limited resources available at present. For a discussion of the requirements which have to be met by such in-depth programs, see David C. McClelland, "Toward a Theory of Motive Acquisition," **American Psychologist** (May, 1965) pp. 321-33.

[22]This view is woven deeply into the American culture. See Merton, op. cit., p. 168. See also Ely Chinoy, **Automobile Workers and the American Dream** (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, 1955) ch I.

[23]See footnote 15.

that at least some of these conditions result from the consistent tendency of our economy to run at less-than-full employment levels and so expansionary policies would be appropriate for increasing participation. At the same time, other, more direct efforts may be necessary to change those conditions which virtually are part of the American way of life.[24]

Desirable changes also could be made in conditions at another level. Organizations which logically could benefit from increased participation of the poor and others of the relatively less-well-off could do much to accommodate themselves to the limited abilities of such people to deal with complicated ritual and other restrictive informal requirements normally expected of the actives. More than that, they could and should adapt more of their internal and external goals so that they provide incentives for greater participation. Trade unions, for example, have members who are inactive members of the lower social strata. Historically, they have demonstrated their concern for the unorganized of the less fortunate in society as well, so that they have always had great potential for propelling nonparticipants to active status. In fact, however, they have not provided the means for this transition. Many of their members are inactive because of the structural requirements of the organizations. And non-members are completely excluded from personal involvement, even though many non-members are the recipients of benefits fought for and won by union organizations.

However, it is doubtful whether even these structural changes, by themselves, could substantially increase the organizational and associational participation of some people who are among the most isolated and disadvantaged of all, such as many of the Appalachian hill-and-hollow dwellers and urban slum dwellers. It must be expected that such people may lack almost completely the skills for participation even in the most rudimentary, simple organizational forms. The primary task which must be completed before their present way of life can be eliminated is that of assisting the people to function in groups and simple communal forms.

With reference to the Appalachian hill-and-hollow dwellers, their behavior has mistakenly been described as evidence of their fabled independence. Recent experimental projects conducted by West Virginia University's Appalachian Center in several isolated communities in the State have demonstrated that the people have the motives for participation in activities beyond their families and occupations. They have a latent desire to live in attractive communities and are willing to work with others to accomplish communal

[24]See, for example, Henry E. Holmquist, "Citizen Action and Community Problems," **Dimensions of Manpower Policy: Programs and Research** (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1966) pp. 218-20.

goals. What they lack, as demonstrated by the projects, is the ability to organize themselves and then to function in active roles.

Evidently, what is needed is a means of simultaneous organization of all of the members of small communities and neighborhoods of large cities into relatively simple while still attractive activities. This would build on such relationships as already exist such as family and informal friendship groups. But this approach is necessary for other reasons as well. Programs which make provision for the entire family would provide reinforcement for outside activities by the individuals or at least forestall overt resentment and recrimination as might be the experience of an individual who spent additional time away from his family. Similarly, programs which include all the families of small communities and neighborhoods of larger cities would run fewer risks of social sanctions being levied against people who are in the process of attempting to change since the widespread inclusion in the project of all results in group, community, and neighborhood endorsement.

In the light of the analysis presented in this paper, it would appear that programs aimed at increasing social, economic and political participation among the lowest strata by focusing programs on limited categories of people and "obvious" problematic characteristics are of dubious long-run or even short-run value. Retraining programs limited to occupational or skill training offered to primary wage earners may fail to provide certain social and political skills which some of the graduates would need to function in employment status much different from that which is customary for them. At the same time, in some cases, the graduates' families are not given assistance to make the necessary transition, although this need is becoming more widely recognized. When this is neglected, however, the families may resent the programs to the point where they either overtly or covertly discourage continuance in them prior to the trainees' graduation. And their friends may react in the same manner.

Many more examples could be given. Programs aimed at preschool children or other categories of the young invite failure by not simultaneously providing for family support and reinforcement. Programs intended to result in community clean-ups regularly do not make provision for including all of the people, young and old alike. And, welfare programs of all types seem to have been designed for the explicit purpose of driving the recipients out of the mainstream of society.

V.

Finally, this paper has attempted to identify the variables and their interrelations which affect patterns of participation. It would

appear that they comprise a most difficult equation to solve. It is obvious that nonparticipation among the lower strata is a consequence of their being lower-class individuals confronted by a middle-class social structure.

In order to deal effectively with such problems as poverty and unemployment, it would appear to be necessary to abandon the middle-class tendency to treat the individual. Instead, the focus must be on the social systems embracing the individuals, and consideration must be given to the necessity and means of adapting the structure to them at least partially. Perhaps if decision-making participation could once be initiated among the inactives, and they could experience its results, the structure would be changed substantially in short order. The problem is how to accomplish some initial structural change in order to make possible the initiation of meaningful participation, while at the same time developing the skills and resources among the people which are necessary for responding to the opportunity.

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